

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 34.4   L 25.0	H 32.9   L 23.5	H 32.8   L 22.8	H 34.4   L 22.2	H 33.6   L 24.1	H 33.2   L 24.6	H 32.8   L 20.4	H 32.6   L 22.5

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:06pm and rises tomorrow at 6:10am.

## 4-day march against Rampal power plant starts

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Hundreds of people embarked on a motorcade titled "Janajatra" towards Rampal yesterday with a demand that the power plant project near the Sundarbans be cancelled.

The protesters held a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka before setting out towards Rampal, Bagerhat around noon.

"By destroying the Sundarbans, the coal fired power plant would leave four crore people of that region vulnerable to natural disasters," said Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the national committee to protect oil, gas, mineral resources, power and ports, which is organising the four-day journey.

The committee also held a long march in 2013 with similar demands following Bangladesh and India's inking of a deal to set up a 1,320MW power plant at Rampal, only 14 kilometre off the Sundarbans.

"There are alternatives to establishing the plant there, but the Sundarbans is a unique ecosystem with no alternatives," added Anu Muhammad.

The protesters left Dhaka in a motorcade of 10 buses and several pickup trucks.

UNB reports: thousands of activists of different left-leaning parties, mainly of Workers Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), BSD, and Ganosanghati Andolon joined the long march.

Organisers said the long march will reach Faridpur on Thursday afternoon while Khulna on Friday and finally the Sundarbans on March 13.

The protesters also demanded enactment of a law in order to prevent the export of mineral resources, full implementation of Fulbari Agreement and ban on lifting coal in open method.



National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports starts a four-day march towards Rampal, Bagerhat from Jatiya Press Club yesterday noon, protesting setting up of the proposed Rampal power plant and protecting the Sundarbans from any further disasters.

## UNION PARISHAD POLLS 2016 EC to ask cops to sue Barguna AL MP over breaching polls code

**Hanif urges CEC to take actions 'illogically' against party men without proper probe**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Election Commission has decided to ask the superintendent of police (SP) of Barguna to sue a ruling Awami League lawmaker of Barguna-2 constituency Showka Hasanur Rahman Rimon for violating electoral code.

"The election commissioners have taken the decision, and a letter with the directive will be issued tonight or tomorrow morning," EC Secretary Sirazul Islam told The Daily Star last evening.

The EC, however, has not given any deadline to file the case, said EC officials.

Breaching electoral law, Rimon on March 5 inaugurated a development project in Barguna and sought vote for the AL-nominated chairman aspirants in the upcoming union parishad (UP) polls there, according to news reports.

As per electoral code, inaugurations of all kinds of development project are prohibited in electoral areas and MPs are barred from joining any electoral campaign.

Earlier on Wednesday, the EC issued a show cause notice to AL lawmaker of Pabna-2 constituency Azizul Huq Arzu for violating electoral code of conduct.

After the recent municipal polls held on December 30 last year, the EC complained to the prime minister and

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## Citizens' group accuses AL leader of grabbing lands of Hindus

**Urge govt to intervene from press conference in capital**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Rights activists and minority leaders yesterday urged the government to take necessary actions against the persons with malign intention trying to grab lands of religious minorities in Parbatipur under Dinajpur, and ensure safety and security of all religious minorities.

They said these at a press conference organised at the capital's Jatiya Press Club to unveil an investigation report on land grabbing and attack by local Awami League leader Emdadul Islam Chowdhury.

Members of Arpita Sampatti Pottarpon Ain Bastobayon Jaitya Nagorik Sononny cell visited Parbatipur in January and interviewed all parties involved.

According to the cell's report, 55

families, including 40 Hindu families, have been living at 25.78 acres of lands for generations. But after the independence in 1971, the lands were listed as vested property and they used to pay taxes.

In 1984, a joint district judge of Dinajpur declared two women proprietors of a portion of the lands, and ordered that listing of that portion of land as vested property would be illegal.

Following the declaration, the government filed a review petition challenging it, but the Supreme Court and appellate division scrapped the petition in 2002.

Since then, they had been using the lands until 2004 when the lands were listed as khas lands, the report said.

But Emdadul was not declared proprietor of the lands, speakers said.

"Though Emdadul is claiming that he bought the lands from one Hasina Begum, he could not show any document in support of his claim. There are no such records in the land office either," said Advocate Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad.

Victim Ananta Kumar Roy said they filed a case with a joint district judge court in 2012 claiming their ownership of the lands, which was now under trial.

"If the court gave verdict against us, then we will leave it," he said, adding that Emdadul and his men still kept grabbing the lands and attacking them (victims) despite a court injunction barring Emdadul from using the lands until the case was disposed of.

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## Space for dissent shrinking

**Says UN Special Rapporteur Heiner Bielefeldt in report about Bangladesh**

**DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT**

The adoption of certain restrictive legislative and administrative measures has led to a shrinking space for religious or political dissent and frank public discourse, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief Heiner Bielefeldt has said.

He made the comment in a report on Bangladesh to the UN Human Rights Council mainly describing what he said during his visit to Dhaka last year.

Even, it says when the rules were enacted with the intention to defend secular democracy and may thus inadvertently erode the very principles that the measures were supposed to protect.

The UN expert undertook a visit to Bangladesh from August 31 to September 9, 2015 and he presented the report on January 22 and it made public on Wednesday.

While appreciating the government's commitment to further develop an inclusive secularity of the state, which is supposed to provide space for the free unfolding of religious

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## BNP unveils logo, slogan for March 19 council

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

BNP yesterday unveiled the logo, theme and slogan of its forthcoming sixth national council.

Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, a BNP standing committee member and the chief of the party's council preparatory committee's sub-committee on management and publicity, revealed those at a programme in a Dhaka hotel.

The council is scheduled to be held on March 19 at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the city.

He also inaugurated the activities of the management and publicity sub-committee.

The theme of the council is "We will Free Democracy" while the slogan "Corruption and Misrule will Surely End -- Bangladesh is for Democracy."

The council's logo contains the symbol of the Liberation War and the National Memorial, National Flag and the sheaf of paddy, the party's electoral symbol.

Gayeshwar told the programme, "We want to go

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From left, Ann McConnell, public affairs officer of the American Center, Ejaj Ahmad, president of BYLC, Kazi Akhtar Uddin Ahmed, secretary to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and K M Abdus Salam, acting director general of NGO Affairs Bureau, at the 14th Building Bridges through Leadership Training programme.

## Bangladesh's future depends on quality of young leaders

**Youth and sports ministry secretary tells BYLC event**

**CITY DESK**

Stressing social cohesion in society, Kazi Akhtar Uddin Ahmed, secretary to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, has said the future of Bangladesh largely depends on the quality of youth leadership.

He was addressing as the chief guest at the opening ceremony of the 14th "Building Bridges through Leadership Training" (BBLT) programme of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center, says a BYLC press release.

"I commend BYLC on bringing together students from English, Bangla and Madrasa medium and fostering values of inclusive and tolerant leadership among the young generation," he said.

"Leadership is not about advancing your own personal interests. It is about working with others and striving to make progress on some of the tough challenges facing a group, community, or country. I hope the training at BYLC will cultivate courage, compassion, and competence and prepare you for a lifetime of leadership for the development of our society," said BYLC President Ejaj Ahmad.

KM Abdus Salam, acting director general of NGO Affairs Bureau, who was a special guest, said, "BYLC's pioneering work in the field of youth leadership is instrumental in developing the next generation."

Forty-two students are selected competitively to go through a rigorous training on the theoretical and practical concepts of leadership. They will then apply their classroom learning into action by designing and implementing small, scalable, and sustainable community service projects.

Ann McConnell, public affairs officer of the American Center, also graced the event as a special guest.

## India passes law to develop 111 rivers as transport routes

**PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi**

Indian parliament gave its nod to a bill to convert 111 rivers across India into National Waterways, one of which would facilitate seamless transportation of cargo from India to Bangladesh.

The National Waterways Bill was passed by Rajya Sabha, on Wednesday, which was approved by Lok Sabha last year.

Indian Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari said the passage of the much-awaited bill will boost the maritime trade and augment their economy.

He regretted that waterways had taken a backseat in India, with only 3.5 percent of trade being done through the mode there as against 47 percent in China, 40 percent in Europe, and 35 percent in Bangladesh.

"We are setting up three multi-model hubs including one in Sahibganj in Bihar and once completed, a cargo could directly go to Bangladesh from Indian states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and states like Uttar Pradesh," he said.

## 3 girls rescued from forced prostitution, 4 arrested

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

Police in Chittagong city yesterday rescued three teenage girls from forced prostitution and arrested four people in this connection.

The arrestees are Nasir Uddin, 48, his wife Kulsuma Begum, 40, and their accomplices Ali Hossain, 30, and Shamsul Islam, 38, said police.

On information, a team of police from Panchlaish Police Station conducted a drive at a house in the city's Hill View Residential Area in the morning and arrested the four in connection with the force prostitution, said Inspector (investigation) of the police station Gias Uddin.

Later, police rescued the girls, who are aged between 16 to 18 years, from the house. They were confined to the house for around three years, he said.

Quoting the girls the inspector said that the arrestees brought them in the city from different areas of the country after alluring them to give jobs in different private companies.

A case was filed with the police station in this connection. Later, the arrestees were sent to jail, he added.

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